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The Story of the Wonderful Dr. E. E. Schmidt Fuerte Avocado Tree

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Southern Nurseries, Inc.

Sole Propagators

Bartow, Florida

Avocado Tree Bears 2108 Fruit Sixth Year

By A. G. Mann

"I believe that you not only have the finest Fuerte avocado tree in Florida but the finest of its kind in the world. I believe that your tree is worth thousands of dollars." This statement is attributed to Mr. Wilson Popenoe, the well known avocado expert of the Bureau of Foreign Plant Introduction, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., upon the occasion of his recent visit to the home of Dr. E. E. Schmidt of Blanton, Pasco county, Florida.

Four years and ten months ago Dr. Schmidt planted a "Fuerte" avocado tree in his back yard and, aside from packing the dirt well around the roots after removing it from the box, paid no attention to the tree which has in recent months become known from one end of the state to the other as a great find. The second year after planting the tree Dr. Schmidt was rewarded with 25 fine avocados. He thought that was pretty good for such a young tree and when the third season's crop matured and he found that he had 800 fine fruit he was pleased of course, but not surprised at the action of this remarkable tree. It was no more than he expected of it. With the passing of another year he found however that he had not only about 1000 fruit hanging on the tree but in addition to this had a tree which had become famous; a home which had been turned into a day and night bureau of information and a place which had become the Mecca for avocado enthusiasts from all over Florida. Dr. Schmidt has begun to realize that there are a great number of people in the state, particularly the central portions, who don't mind travelling a few hundred miles to convince themselves that the reports which they have heard about this tree are correct.

Last season's yield from this famous tree was 2108 fruit averaging one pound in weight.

Dr. Schmidt's Fuerte Avocado tree is located on one of the highest points in Pasco county and from the very top of this ridge rears its topmost branches some twenty feet above the sandy loam soil as though it would proclaim its royalty to the world. Hanging from every limb from the uppermost branches to

those which lower down bow to the ground with their burden will be seen clusters of fruit from half a dozen to forty in number revealing to the investigator at one glance nature's wonderful gift.

If there is such a thing as a perfect tree this Fuerte is indeed the one; perfect in form; perfect in health; perfect in productiveness and perfect in beauty. As Dr. Schmidt unlocked the gate (he must guard his tree from thieves now) and directed me towards his tree my first impression was that there must be

some mistake. Surely this great tree must be more than six years old. It was at least 20 feet high and twenty-five feet in diameter—I had grown avocado trees and had never obtained such results as this—I was soon convinced however that the tree was only a youngster among trees. I eagerly lifted the nearest limb and looked under the protecting foliage and beheld more avocados than I had heretofore thought it possible for a single tree to produce. The limb I lifted carried forty-two full sized fruit weighing from a pound



Picture of Fuerte Avocados on one limb of the Famous Dr. E. E. Schmidt tree.

to a pound and a half! I counted them. The next one carried twenty-two fruit and as one "cruised" around the tree taking a look here and there doubt gave place to conviction and the belief became fixed that Dr. Schmidt had indeed the greatest tree of its variety in Florida.

Was there some special reason why this tree grew and produced so well? I asked the genial Doctor what he had done to make it grow so well and he told me that he had never used a pound of fertilizer for he never saw the necessity of doing so—I didn't either—and had never even cultivated the tree. It just grew like the far famed Topsy. The tree had never been sprayed but was, according to Popenoe, entirely free from disease. Was there special merit in the land then? I quickly discarded this idea for it was easy to see that the land was the same as thousands of acres of land in central Florida. I was forced to the conclusion that not only did this tree bear more fruit and bear it with more regularity and under more satisfactory conditions than any heretofore heard of but that it possessed the ability to out-grow any other avocado tree I had ever before seen.

After looking at the tree from all angles and after looking in it and under it; up it and down it, I decided that I had seen about all that was necessary so we walked out of

the gate and locked the door after us. I asked Dr. Schmidt what he was going to do with his tree. "I have, of course, received many requests for budwood from this tree," said the Doctor, "and not a few rather interesting business propositions, some of which were obviously intended to restrict the use of budwood to a few people who intended to plant acreages and some of them which did not seem to insure the public getting only the best quality of trees propagated from my Fuerte. I finally made up my mind that the possession of this tree entailed a responsibility upon me which made it necessary that I exercise considerable care in the manner in which I released budwood. I finally concluded negotiations with the Southern Nurseries Inc., of Bartow for the sole right to cut budwood from my tree and have the distinct understanding with them that no budding will be done from nursery clippings but that all trees sold will be propagated from buds taken from the parent tree. The many people who have seen this tree and among them the number of experts who have pronounced my tree to be the best known have convinced me that from my "sport" Fuerte it is possible to establish a big avocado industry in central Florida. I know that my tree is a good one and I know that with the cooperation of the Southern Nur-

series we will be able to do a great deal for the protection of planters of avocado groves."

I asked the Doctor if there would be enough budwood to supply the demand if all buds were taken from the parent tree and he told me that he considered it of more importance to build up the industry slowly but safely than to run the risk of deterioration from the practice of using nursery clippings.

It has long been expected by avocado experts that sooner or later some cross would develop which would produce an avocado tree entirely suited to Florida conditions and it looks like Dr. Schmidt's tree fills the bill.

I remember seeing the other day a certified check for over \$16,500 which was paid for the fruit from a ten acre, ten year old tangerine grove and I marvelled at the sum but when I realize that on one avocado tree there is several hundred dollars worth of fruit hanging and when I start to multiply this by the number of trees on ten acres I arrive at figures which I think it better not to put into this story. Most people who read those figures would be like the man who saw a kangaroo for the first time and said "There is no such animal."

I, too, think that I have seen the "most wonderful avocado tree in Florida," I only wish I had seen it first.

E. E. SCHMIDT

Season, December to March; Fruit of dark green color with glossy skin. Meat Straw-color—Nutty flavor, average weight one pound. Good shipper—No home or commercial planting complete without some of these famous trees—Prices Lots of 10 ^{each} \$7.50, Above 10 on application.

WE ALSO PROPAGATE AND HAVE ON HAND THE FOLLOWING VARIETIES:--

GOTTFRIED

Season, September to November. Shape nearly round. Weight about one pound. Small tight seed. Surface is purplish-black when fruit is ripe. Quality of flesh is unsurpassed. This variety is pure Mexican and is extremely hardy. Very good for commercial planting. Is regarded as one of the most delicious varieties grown.

TRAPP

Season, October to December. Shape nearly round. Weight one and a half pounds. Seed medium large fitting tightly in cavity. Flesh rich yellow color, free from fiber; flavor rich and nutty. And early and prolific bearer, and its shipping qualities have made it a favorite for general commercial planting, but should be planted in protected acres where cold will not be too severe.

WINSLOWSON

Season, November and December. Shape nearly round. Weight one and one half to two pounds. Large tight seed. Flesh excellent. Glossy green skin. This variety resembles the Trapp, but is a more vigorous grower, and very resistant to insects and diseases. More hardy than the Trapp. We consider it one of the most profitable varieties.

PANCHOY

Season, December and January. Shape ovid, and slightly oblique at the apex. Weight one to one and one half pounds. Small tight fitting seed. Golden yellow flesh free from fiber and unusually rich in flavor. Skin is dark green and heavily pebbled. Vigorous grower and a good shipper.

COLLINSON

Season, January and February. Shape broadly pyriform. Weight one and one half to two pounds. Medium sized tight seed. Flesh rich yellow in color, fiberless and rich and nutty in flavor. We recommend this West Indian-Guatemalan hybrid very highly for commercial planting and believe it to be among the best, if not the best, that is possible to obtain.

FUERTE

Season, January to March. Shape pyriform. Weight about one pound. Seed medium and tight fitting. Flesh straw color, smooth and well flavored. Skin thin, hard and green. Among the richest Avocados known in food value. A shy bearer under some Florida conditions although prolific in California.

SPINKS

Season, January to March. Shape round to pear shape. Weight one to one and one half pounds. Seed large and tight fitting. Rich cream colored flesh free from fiber and of excellent flavor. Skin purplish-black when mature. The Spinks is one of the finest of the Gautemalans.

QUEEN

Season, January to March. Pearshape. Weight from 1½ to 2½ pounds. Has the smallest tight seed known. Flesh firm, yellowish in color, free from fiber and with a very rich nutty flavor. Skin a deep purple in color. Tree vigorous, spreading at the base and very productive. Fruit ships well.

LINDA

Season, January to March. Shape pyriform. Weight two to three and one half pounds. Seed small fitting tightly in cavity. Flesh pale yellow smooth and rich. Keeps extremely well. The tree is vigorous, hardy and a very prolific bearer.

NIMLIOH—G

Season, December and January. Shape broadly oval. Weight two to three and one half pounds. Seed medium sized. Flesh yellow. Free from fiber, discolorations, smooth and rich in flavor. Skin deep green, thick and woody in texture. A vigorous grower, hardy, and very productive.

WINSLOW—G

Season, February, March and April. Small purplish-brown pear. Weight eight to twelve ounces. Flesh rich and nutty in flavor, free from fiber. Tree upright and a vigorous grower. Regular free bearer.

And besides those named above we have the following: ATLEX, KANO, VERDE, PREFECTO, GABNAL, McDONNELL, NIBLO.

We furnish all varieties of Avocados listed above f. o. b. Nursery, Each Lots of 10 or more \$2.00
Lots of 100 or more \$1.75; Lots of 1000 on application.

Southern Nurseries, Bartow, Florida.

Gentlemen:

Please send me information regarding prices and terms of sale of the DR.
E. E. SCHMIDT FUERTE AVOCADO TREES.

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